MODERN CRITICISM:

BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

PROFESSOR ROBERTSON SMITH

AT THE

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, ON THE 27TH OCTOBER, 1880.

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THE REV. GEORGE MACAULAY,
OF ROXBURGH FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

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"I do much condemn that interpretation of the Scripture which is only after the manner as men use to interpret a profane book."—LORD BACON.

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PRINCETON
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THEOLOGICAL

MODERN CRITICISM.

NARRATIVE.

SENTENCE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, MAY, 1880.

THE General Assembly, after re-affirming the decisions of the two preceding Assemblies finding relevant the libel against Professor R. Smith, and after approving of the service of the libel upon him by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, declared it ripe for probation. Four motions were then submitted to the Assembly—one to proceed to probation; another to withdraw the libel, but remove the Professor from his Chair; a third to pass from the libel, and repone the Professor with an admonition, declaring at the same time that his views were not the views of the Free Church; and a fourth, which, by a majority of seven, in a vote of 299 as against 292, became the judgment of the Assembly, was in the following terms:—

"That the General Assembly, considering that the course of the case has confirmed the Report of the College Committee, that they had not found any ground sufficient to justify a process for heresy against Professor Robertson Smith, inasmuch as seven of the eight counts in the original Libel have been found irrelevant; while, with regard to the remaining count, the explanations offered by Professor Smith at various stages, and in particular his answer to the Amended Libel, afford satisfactory evidence that, in this aspect of the case also, there is not sufficient ground to support a process for heresy, do resolve to withdraw the Libel against him.

"Further, the Assembly, finding that Professor Smith is blameworthy for the ungnarded and incomplete statements of his articles, which have occasioned much anxiety in the Church, and given offence to many brethren zealous for the honour of the Word of God, instruct the Moderator to admonish Professor Smith with due solemnity as to the past, in the confident expectation that the defects referred to will be guarded against and avoided in time to come.

"And, finally, the Assembly declares that, in declining to decide on these critical views by way of discipline, the Church expresses no opinion in favour of their truth or probability, but leaves the ultimate decision to future inquiry in the spirit of patience, humility, and brotherly charity, admonishing professors to remember that they are not set for the propagating of their own opinions, but for the maintenance of the doctrine and truth committed to the Church."

Professor Smith acquiesced in the foregoing judgment, and submitted to a solemn admonition from the Moderator.

PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE "HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE."

A few days after the procedure of the Assembly, the eleventh volume of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" was issued, containing several new articles by Professor Smith. Of these, two—namely, those on the prophet "Haggai" and on the "Hebrew Language and Literature"—immediately excited the serious concern of many in the Church, as indicative of a method of criticism not only illegitimate in itself, but also fitted to be most injurious to the doctrine of the historical truth, supreme authority, and Divine inspiration of holy Scripture. The anxiety thus awakened was increased by the circumstances under which the articles were published. For before they were in the printer's hands the author had accepted service of libel for views of a somewhat similar kind. He had also submitted to the solemn censure of the Assembly without affording the slightest indication that these articles were about to appear. With his reasons for the suppression of this important fact we have here nothing to do. There can be no doubt, however, that had the contents of these articles been known before the meeting of the Assembly, the decision given in the case would have been widely different.

MEMORIALS FROM PRESBYTERIES.

Within a few weeks of the appearance of these articles, no fewer than twelve Presbyteries memorialized the August Commission on the subject, requesting that such action should be taken as might be necessary to prevent the Church from sustaining any detriment in the grave emergency which had arisen. A letter was also transmitted to the Commission by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which had been addressed to the Clerk of that Court by Professor Smith.

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION IN AUGUST.

The interest felt on the subject throughout the country was attested by the unusually large attendance of members at the Commission in August. At this meeting, after several motions had been brought forward and discussed, two were put to the vote; one proposing the appointment of a Committee, the other, that no action should be taken *in hoc statu*. The former motion, that of Dr. Wilson, was carried by a majority of 210 to 139, and was in the following terms:—

"That the Commission, having respect to the letter of Professor Smith transmitted by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and to the representations

made to them by so many Presbyteries as to the writings of Professor Smith, to which attention has been called since last General Assembly, and considering the widespread uneasiness and alarm as to the character of these writings, resolve to appoint a Committee maturely to examine them and the letter of Professor Smith, and to consider their bearing upon the accepted belief and teaching of the Church; to report their opinion and advice to an *in hunc effectum* meeting of Commission, which is hereby appointed to be held on 27th October next, at eleven o'clock, that they may be prepared to take such action in this matter as may appear requisite; and the Commission hereby cite Professor Smith to appear for his interest at this *in hunc effectum* meeting, and instruct the clerks to see that a citation is served upon him in due form."

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION IN OCTOBER.

On the 27th of October, 1880, there assembled in Edinburgh the most numerously attended meeting of Commission that has ever been held in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, no fewer than four hundred and seventy members having recorded their votes. After the Committee's report on the writings of Professor Smith had been submitted, and certain dissents from the report on the part of some members of Committee had been read, as also a letter from Professor Smith to the Principal Clerk, embodying a protest, the following motion was proposed in the Commission:—

"The Commission receive the report of the Committee, and approve of it generally; and considering that the Commission is instructed to advert to the interests of the Church on every occasion, that the Church do not suffer or sustain any prejudice which they can prevent; considering also that the various writings of Professor Robertson Smith, adverted to in the report, which have created serious alarm and uneasiness in the Church, as being fitted to produce upon readers the impression that the Bible does not present a reliable statement of the truth of God, and that God is not the author of it, have been published since last Assembly, and were not in view of the Assembly; considering that these writings were prepared for publication at a time when their author had accepted service of a libel found relevant, charging him with cognate views; and considering, further, that the Church must sustain serious injury if she can be regarded as giving any sanction to, or as concurring in, the views expressed in these writings, declare that the Commission, as representing the Free Church, and as charged with conserving its interests, cannot but protest against the Church being implicated in the promulgation of them, and resolve to transmit the report of their Committee to the General Assembly, that they may take such action in the matter as to them may seem meet. Further, in view of the whole circumstances of the case, instruct Professor Smith to abstain from teaching his classes during the ensuing session, leaving the whole question of his status and position in the Free Church to the determination of the ensuing Assembly. The Commission also instruct the College Committee to make provision for the teaching of those classes during the ensuing session."

This motion was adopted by a majority of 268 to 202.

The Committee, in their report, drew attention to

(1.) Passages in which the books of Scripture are spoken of in an irreverent manner:

(2.) Passages in which the books of Scripture are spoken of in such a way as to render it very difficult for readers to regard God as the Author of them:

(3.) Passages which naturally suggest that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences: and

(4.) Passages which discredit prophecy in its predictive aspect.

The Committee further repudiated, and declared to be altogether untenable, the interpretation put upon the judgment of last Assembly by Professor Smith in his letter to the Clerk of the Presbytery of Aberdeen.

Before the motion for the approval of the report was discussed, Professor Smith was heard "for his interest."

PROFESSOR SMITH'S SPEECH EXAMINED.

HIS PROTEST.

He spoke under protest. This protest asserted the procedure to be first, unconstitutional and incompetent, and secondly, fitted to be injurious to "himself personally," and to the Church. It might have possessed some force had the proposal before the Commission been to originate a formal process against him. But this was so far from being the case that all the Commission proposed to do was to protect the interests of the Church till next Assembly. This the Commission was bound to do in accordance with a special clause in the Act of Assembly defining its duties and powers.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEFENCE.

The Professor complained that the report had only been put into his hands at eleven o'clock that morning. He admitted having seen the dissents on the previous night.

In reply to this objection it is enough to say, first, that it is well known that he was kept informed from time to time of the proceedings of the Committee; and, secondly, that the objections likely to be taken to his writings must have been all along present to his mind. But, in addition to this, Professor Lindsay's long and elaborate dissent from the finding of the Committee is, in substance, identical with the speech delivered by Professor Smith.

THE PROPOSAL TO APPROVE THE REPORT GENERALLY.

The Professor complained of the vagueness of this proposal, and of the obscurity of expression which, he alleged, was characteristic of the report.

Considering the circumstances under which the Commission had assembled, and the nature of the report, it would have been altogether unreasonable to ask or expect more than a general approval. The "obscurity of expression" objected to is nothing else than the extreme guardedness of the language used by the Committee, indicating that the report had been composed with the greatest deliberation and care.

DOES THE REPORT SAY TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE?

The Report would have said too little if the Commission had been instituting a formal process against Professor Smith —a course which it was not proposed they should adopt. The Report does not say more than is necessary in order to vindicate the reputation of the Church from the suspicion of being implicated in the views expressed in his recent writings.

ALLEGED INSINUATIONS.

The Report contains no insinuations against Professor Smith, but gives, in general terms, a description of the character and tendency of his recent writings.

The following statement was here made by the Professor:—

"Such remarks as are made about the general tendency of my writings are not new, and are similar to those for which I was formerly tried, and upon which I was acquitted,—I say 'on which I was acquitted' for these reasons,—because the libel formulated against me was in greater part withdrawn, and the part which was left never went on to probation; and, therefore, never went on to judgment—and in the judgment of every court, a man is acquitted if he is not condemned" (*Speech, p. 8*).

In answer to this, it is to be observed that the libel was not withdrawn till its relevancy (in respect of the Deuteronomy count) had been affirmed by three successive Assemblies; and the withdrawal of the libel at last Assembly by no means involved the acquittal of the Professor, the effect of that decision being merely to repone him in his chair after admonition. The departure from some of the charges in the original libel is no proof that the views challenged by these charges are not contrary to, or inconsistent with, the Confessional doctrine

of the Church. Moreover acquittal and censure do not generally proceed from a court in the same case and at the same time.

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

FIRST DIVISION.—THE CHARGE OF IRREVERENCE.

In vindicating himself from the charge of irreverence, the Professor says—

"A person may speak in an irreverent manner of Scripture —it is done every day—without denying that it is Scripture." *(Speech, p. 8).*

This statement, if true, only shows that in daily life the authority of God is lightly regarded; but irreverence prepares the way for the acceptance of theories inimical to the truth and inspiration of Holy Scripture. Grave theologians are not accustomed to speak irreverently of Scripture.

The Professor states that he has spoken of Scripture in the language of scholarship. The Committee in the report object not to his scholarship, but to his irreverent application of it. "Not learning, but unsanctified learning," as Halyburton remarks, "has done much injury to the Church of God."

The Professor declares that he has set certain statements of facts down in plain language, and that it has been characteristic of Scotchmen, "because holy things were very real and practical to them in daily life, to speak of them with that plainness and bluntness with which all men are accustomed to speak of things that are real, and not simply things they are accustomed to hear in church with their hats off."

In treating of all matters connected with the Bible, professors and others should remember the word to Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. iii. 5).

He pleads the duties of his office as a justification of the manner in which he has dealt with the Hebrew language and literature. But it was surely as possible for him as for his predecessors in similar offices in the Church to discharge these duties with becoming reverence. The structure and historical variations of the Hebrew language can be treated without incurring the charge of irreverence. But they have not so been handled by him.

FIRST DIVISION.—FIRST PARTICULAR.

THE LITERARY STYLE OF BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

In vindication of the statement that "the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, the colourless narrative of the Chronicles, and

even the book of Esther, are singularly destitute of literary merit," the Professor says:—

"It is undoubtedly true that God might, had He wished, have bestowed upon the author of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and upon the author of the book of Esther, the supernatural and miraculous gift of such beautiful and splendid Hebrew diction as belongs to Isaiah; but I hold that He did not work such a miracle. It is a fact that He did not work such a miracle, and I cannot see why Dr. Wilson and his Committee should take it upon them to say, not that God did work such a miracle—which is not true—but that it is irreverent in any one to say that He did not" (*Speech, pp. 9, 10*).

This is an evasion, not a reply. Professor Smith here vindicates himself from a charge which the Committee have not brought against him. Had he merely affirmed that the style of Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, and Esther is not equal to that of Isaiah, he could not have been accused of irreverence. But his statement is very different from this, characterising these books as "singularly destitute of literary merit." It is easier to reply to imaginary than to real charges. The doctrine of inspiration does not imply the extinction of the individuality of the inspired writers.

FIRST DIVISION.—SECOND PARTICULAR.

ANONYMOUS BROADSIDES.

Here also the Professor evades the charge against him by explaining away, as by an after-thought, what he had said respecting "anonymous broadsides" published by the prophets. By these, he tells us now, that he means anonymous broadsheets. According to his view the prophets of the captivity "instead of waiting till they had a large book," "put a single individual short prophecy upon parchment, upon a broadside—that is, upon a single open sheet of parchment—and sent it through among the people, in order that in that way they might have the word of God." If this statement is not irreverent, it certainly proceeds upon the unwarranted assumption that the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Isaiah, and other portions of that book, were not written till the time of the Babylonian captivity. Besides, it has never been a characteristic of God's inspired messengers to shrink from danger in the proclamation of the truth, as is implied by Professor Smith in the following passage:—

"How could these prophets get up in the market-place, under the eyes of the Babylonian police, and there preach a

sermon that Babylon was to be destroyed? We know what would have happened."

Well, what *did* happen when, as Professor Smith himself admits, Jonah went to Nineveh and preached, saying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown"?

FIRST DIVISION.—THIRD PARTICULAR.

POPULAR LITERATURE IN ISRAEL.

There is nothing in what the Professor here says as to the history, when told "in plain, popular story," "being full of God, the Redeemer, and the King," to meet the charge of irreverence brought against him by the Committee. All that is here said might have been stated by a critic of the most destructive school. Nor can it be deemed either reverent or just criticism to speak of a portion of the book of Genesis as containing "the loves of Jacob and Rachel." Of the popular literature in Israel apart from what has come down to us under the seal of inspiration, we know nothing.

FIRST DIVISION.—FOURTH PARTICULAR.

PROPHECY AFTER THE EXILE.

The Professor, besides saying, as in his published speech, p. 11, that "the brief revival of spoken prophecy after the exile lacks the old fire," stated, in the article complained of, that it "presents no notable literary feature, except the use of somewhat fantastic symbolic imagery, the prototype of the later apocalyptic literature." If this, taken in connection with other statements of a similar kind, is not an irreverent treatment of Scripture, it would be difficult to establish a charge of irreverence against any man. It is the method, manner, and form of expression characteristic of the destructive school of Biblical Criticism. He admitted in his address before the Commission that, had he expected his words to be so narrowly scrutinized, he would have been more guarded in his language.

SECOND DIVISION.—GOD THE AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURE.

The Committee's second charge is given under the heading —"Passages in which the books of Scripture are spoken of in such a way as to render it very difficult for readers to regard God as the author of them. "Here the Professor draws attention to the language of the Committee when he says

"difficult, not impossible, you observe." But it should be noted that the Committee do not pronounce whether it is impossible or not.

SECOND DIVISION.—FIRST PARTICULAR.

CHRONICLES.

Professor Smith adduces no evidence of any weight in favour of the statement that "the Chronicler no longer thoroughly understood the old Hebrew sources from which he worked." What he alleges concerning the decay of the language and its having been written latterly rather as a dead than as a living language by some of the writers, and concerning the alleged mistake of the Chronicler as to the ships of Tarshish and one or two other faulty expressions, is unsupported by proof. But even if it were proved that in those places there appeared what to the critical student seemed to be faulty expressions, neither this fact nor any of his other allegations could give warrant for the sweeping assertion that "the Chronicler no longer thoroughly understood the old Hebrew sources from which he worked." It must not be forgotten that, at this time of alleged ignorance of the old Hebrew sources, some of the books of Scripture which are written in the purest Hebrew were, according to the Professor's own statement, composed, and, besides these, a large part of the Psalter. It is for him, not for us, to reconcile these contradictory statements.

Sweeping assertions like those to which we have referred, generalised from inadequate data, render it very difficult for readers to regard God as the author of holy Scripture; and this difficulty is not lessened, but much increased by the illustration given by the Professor from the Latin writings of Luther and Calvin. For as no one maintains that they wrote under inspiration, the only effect of the supposed analogy is to reduce the inspired writer of Chronicles to the level of uninspired writers such as Calvin and Luther.

The Professor's allegation that the apostles were not perfect Hebrew scholars because they very often used the Septuagint is a singular specimen of the logic of the higher criticism. Should the Free Church follow him in this style of reasoning, it will soon become, to use his own expression, "the laughing-stock of Christendom." Because a man, in addressing Greeks, speaks Greek, is it a legitimate inference that he is not a perfect Hebrew scholar? Because the apostle Paul, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," in addressing those whom he knew to possess the Septuagint, chose very often to quote from that version, is he to be pronounced an imperfect Hebrew scholar?

SECOND DIVISION.—SECOND PARTICULAR.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

Respecting the Song of Songs, the Professor had said—

"This lyric drama has suffered much from interpolation, and presumably was not written down till a comparatively late date, and from imperfect recollection, so that its original shape is very much lost."

Let this statement be analysed—

1. We do not possess the Song in its original shape. This is an assertion without proof.

2. It was written from imperfect recollection. This is also an unproved assertion.

3. It has suffered much from interpolation. This is another groundless assertion.

4. It was presumably not written till a comparatively late date. Of this assertion there is no proof. It is a mere conjecture of the critics.

And all these assertions together are as destructive as they are destitute of proof. The removal of the alleged interpolations from the book might, in the opinion of Professor Smith, facilitate the faith of many modest and humble Christians, but this would at the same time destroy faith in the canonical authority of the Scriptures. The removal of the whole book from the canon, would be in keeping with the Professor's theory of the book according to which it is one of the many love adventures of Solomon, written in the form of a lyric drama.

After a disquisition on the Septuagint as a version fitted to be of use for the purposes of emendatory criticism, he concludes thus:—

"We have not got the whole Song of Solomon, and we have got something more. Something has been lost, and something has been added."

These statements are characteristic of his method. Where others hesitate, he presumes to dogmatize; and, forgetting that the Free Church is not a young men's speculative society or debating club, he speaks of the Canticles, as of the other Scriptures, in such a way as to render it very difficult to believe that God is the author of them, or that they are given by inspiration of God. No allegations about "fragments" in the New Testament or in the Old, or about lost books of song or history, (such as the book of Jasher, or the book of the Wars of Jehovah,) render credible, or even plausible, the Professor's destructive assertions regarding the Song of Solomon.

SECOND DIVISION.—THIRD PARTICULAR.

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

He admits that the question he has raised about the book of Ezra is very complicated. He complains that the Committee did not quote the following sentence from the same article (Haggai):—

"What had actually been effected during these years for the restoration of the temple is a question of some difficulty. *It seems safest* to start from the *explicit* contemporary evidence of Hag. ii. 18 (*cf.* ii. 15 and Zech. viii. 9), which gives the ninth month of the second year of Darius—after Haggai had begun to preach—as the date when the temple was founded by Zerubbabel and Joshua." After this admission and complaint, he proceeds to say—

"There is a little disorder in the text. There is a little transposition of some of the sources, as there often is in manuscripts." In other words, in order to vindicate his own exegesis of one or more passages, he assumes, contrary to evidence, that "the Chronicler has somewhat dislocated the order of events." He has no hesitation in assigning to an oversight on the part of the inspired historian what, according to his exegetical method, he explains by assuming the correctness of his own theory. But this is the way to multiply difficulties, not to remove them.

THIRD DIVISION.

SCRIPTURE AN AUTHENTIC RECORD OF FACTS.

He begins his reply to the third main charge of the Committee under the heading "Passages which naturally suggest that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences," by saying, "naturally suggest, let it be observed," "the Committee are afraid to trust themselves far." On this it is sufficient to remark that the meaning "naturally suggested" by any composition is the interpretation put upon it by ordinary readers.

THIRD DIVISION.—FIRST PARTICULAR.

EARLIEST LAWS AND LYRICS; THE BOOK OF JASHER.

The Professor states that he is prepared to show, by a hundred proofs, that "the earliest products of Hebrew authorship" circulated orally. This fact has never been questioned, and the proof of it is, therefore, unnecessary. The Confession

of Faith admits that there was a time when the revelation of God and His will had not yet been committed to writing.

It is true that we have notices of early written collections that seem to have been prior to some parts of our present historical books. But it does not follow from this that these books were not composed at the early time at which they bear to have been written. That part of the book of Numbers, chapter xxi., in which mention is made of the book of the Wars of Jehovah must have been written a short time before the death of Moses, and there is nothing contrary to, or inconsistent with, this fact in the reference that is there made to the book of the Wars of Jehovah. Besides, it is quite possible, nay, probable, according to the views of certain learned, judicious, and devout theologians, that this reference in the book of Numbers may have been made by a later hand than that of Moses.

The book of Jasher is expressly mentioned in Joshua x. 13, and 2 Sam. i. 18. Here we make no account of the conjectural reference to it (according to Wellhausen) in connection with the building of Solomon's temple. That conjecture needs verification; and one of our chief complaints respecting our Professor is that, without pausing to deliberate and to test the truth and worth of proposed emendations, he is too ready to accept them on the authority of others. What is said in Joshua respecting this book is, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?"

What is said in 2 Sam. i. 17, 18, is "And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son (also he bade them teach the children of Israel the bow; behold it is written in the book of Jasher)."

These references to the book of Jasher, and quotations from it, whatever be their value, are in parenthetical form; and, in both cases, the references are in such general terms as not to warrant the conclusions which Professor Smith deduces from them. It is much more probable that they were inserted by a later hand than that the historical books of Scripture were not completed till the date assigned to them by Professor Smith and the modern critics. A similar remark would apply to the reference to the book of Jasher alleged to have been discovered by Wellhausen in the Septuagint translation of the book of Kings. This alleged reference to the book of Jasher occurs in the Septuagint version of 1 Kings viii. 53. In that place, however, the book of Jasher is not mentioned. The book there spoken of is entitled "the Book of the Ode," whereas in the two places in

which the Septuagint refers to the book of Jasher, it is rendered the book of the Upright (τοῦ ἐνθοῦς). An ingenious attempt, indeed, has been conjecturally made to identify "the Book of the Ode" (lxx. 1 Kings viii. 53.) with the book of Jasher. It cannot be said that this attempt results in anything more than a conjecture. But, besides this, the verse in which it occurs in the Septuagint is separated by more than forty verses from the place in Solomon's prayer proposed to be assigned to it. Further, the absence of this reference to "the Book of the Ode" from the original Hebrew text affords a strong presumption against attaching any real value to the passage as found in the Septuagint. Accordingly, Professor Smith's assertion, grounded on this conjectural emendation, that the book of Jasher is not earlier than the time of Solomon, is not warranted by the facts. But even in the Septuagint text, the words referring to "the Book of the Ode" are manifestly parenthetical, and form no part of the original narrative there given. The sum of the whole matter respecting the book of the Wars of Jehovah and the book of Jasher is that we have no clue to the age of either of these books, and know little or nothing of their character or contents.

THIRD DIVISION.—SECOND PARTICULAR.

THE LAWS WRITTEN BY MOSES.

In vindication of the statements that "it may fairly be made a question whether Moses left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone, and that even Ex. xxiv. 4 and xxxiv. 27 may, in the original context, have referred to the ten words alone," Professor Smith says that the whole point lies in the word "writing," and adds, "All that I have asked is, 'How much was put in writing?'" Let us ascertain what is implied in this statement and question. It implies (1.) that the statements in the Pentateuch, in which it is affirmed that Moses wrote certain statutes and laws may be false; (2.) that all those places in the Old Testament generally in which reference is made to the law of Moses, a body of precepts, statutes, and commandments, of which we have no knowledge except in their written form, may be false; (3.) more particularly, that the statement concerning the "Book of the Law of Jehovah" found in the temple in the time of Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14), that it was "by the hand of Moses," may be false; for what does a book by or in a man's hand mean but a book written by that man's hand? (4.) that when the Lord Jesus Christ, with direct and express reference

to a precept recorded in Deut. xxiv. 1, said, "For the hardness of your heart he (Moses) wrote you this precept," the Lord Jesus may have spoken what was false. This is a specimen of what comes of saying that "it is a fair question whether Moses left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone."

On what ground does the Professor's statement rest that "even Ex. xxiv. 4 and xxxiv. 27 may in the original context have referred to the ten words alone"? It rests upon the theory that, in the places referred to, there is a twofold narrative put together by the hand of an editor. In chapter xxiv. the verses 1, 2, 9-11, 15-17 are said to belong to the one document, while, in the same chapter, the verses 3-8, 12-14, 18, are referred to the other document. Manipulated in this mechanical way, the words in verse 4, "And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah," are made to connect themselves with the words in verse 12, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Come up into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them." In a similar way the words just quoted are made to connect themselves with those in xxxiv. 27, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel;" "these words" being held to mean not those given in the immediately preceding context, but those given on the tables of stone referred to in Ex. xxiv. 12. According to this exegetical method, men may affirm or deny what they please concerning any part of the written word of God.

It is to be noted that Professor Smith's definition of the law, given in his article, "Bible," as consisting, for the most part, till the time of the captivity, of collections of decisions orally given by the priests, while compatible with his idea that Moses may not have left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone, is altogether inconsistent with the conception of law found in the history, the Psalms, and the prophecies of the Old Testament. For (1.) it involves the disintegration of the several parts of holy Scripture; (2.) it breaks the continuity of the record; (3.) it insinuates the existence of contradiction between law and law, and between law and history, as well as between the history, the Psalms, and the prophecies.

In illustration of what has been said, it may be asked what explanation could be given by Professor Smith respecting the book of Jehovah mentioned in Isaiah xxxiv. 16, "Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read; no one of these shall fail,

none shall want her mate"? Again it may be asked how, according to his theory, would he explain the references made to the law in Amos and Hosea, and more particularly to the words, "I have written to him the great things (or the many things) of my law"? (Hosea viii. 12.) What was signified by this statement taken in connection with the immediately preceding words, "Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin"? To what period in Israel's history do the words apply that are found in 2 Chron. xv. 3, "Now for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law"? Do they not describe Israel's condition under the judges? Did not Israel, in the days of the judges, possess, in written form, the law of Jehovah and His commandments by Moses? Did not Joshua, according to the written instructions of Moses in Deut. xxvii. 2-4, build an altar unto Jehovah, as narrated in Joshua viii. 30-35? Does this historic record in Joshua, when taken in connection with the words of Moses in Deut. xxvii. 2-4 and Deut. xxxi. 24-26, not conclusively settle and for ever determine the question whether Moses left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone?

It is not here deemed expedient to give any formal refutation of the arguments by which Professor Smith attempts, but in vain, to show that Deuteronomy was not written by Moses, but by another prophet who used the name of Moses in giving a new version of the Mosaic laws adapted to the altered circumstances of a later time. Professor Smith repudiates the idea of this involving, on the part of that prophet, the perpetration of a pious fraud. He speaks of it merely as the adoption of a legitimate literary form, sealed by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But this charitable interpretation of what looks like a pious fraud is repudiated alike by evangelical and rationalistic critics as inconsistent with any known doctrine or conceivable theory of inspiration.

Professor Smith's observations as to Calvin do not bear out the inference which he deduces from them. Between the method of Calvin and that of Professor Smith there is nothing in common; and, accordingly, the latter arrives at conclusions subversive of the fundamental positions maintained and vindicated by the great Reformer.

TESTIMONY OF CHRIST.

The Professor states that "the words of our Lord could not settle any detailed question about the Pentateuch, because He

never had that question before Him in any answer or word He used. Our Lord spoke distinctly and intelligibly and with infallible truth on the points that He spoke to; but I am not able to see that there is any ground in theology for holding that His words had any bearing on points He did not speak to. He did not speak to this point, and upon this point therefore it is not necessary to go further" (*Speech, p. 16*).

Here let the precise state of the question be set before us. It is whether Moses left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone. Did or did not the Lord Jesus speak to that point? The reply to that question has been already given, for we have found that, in answer to a question put to Him by the people, the Lord Jesus, in terms the most precise and emphatic, affirmed that Moses wrote, and did not merely speak, the words recorded in Deut. xxiv. 1. Nor is it an unfair inference from this statement of the Lord, taken in connection with the many other statements in which He testified, in terms both general and specific, that Moses spoke and wrote of Him, and from the terms in which He spoke of the law, that the Lord Jesus put His seal upon the Pentateuch as written by Moses. He spoke to the precise point in question and settled it. He spoke of the general question and settled it. The criticism, therefore, that disputes this settlement of the question before us by the Lord Jesus, is both irreverent and hazardous, notwithstanding what Professor Smith says about calling in the name of the Lord, and degrading it by making it the instrument of a theological agitation. Criticism should stand in awe in the presence and at the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Professor, beyond his attempted vindication of the critical exegesis given by him of Exodus xxiv. 4, and xxxiv. 27, avoids any reference to the complaint that his statement respecting the written laws of Moses "appears irreconcilable with many express statements made in the Pentateuch."

THIRD DIVISION.—THIRD PARTICULAR.

JOURNAL OF PHILOLOGY.

With respect to the extract given by the Committee from the article which appeared in the *Journal of Philology*, containing a statement relating to the law of marriage in Israel, the Professor, repeating what he had said on a former occasion, remarked, "If you cannot admit that it is legitimate for an office-bearer in the Free Church to hold that, under divine sanction, there was a gradual development of the

Mosaic legislation, and an adaptation of it to the growth of society and changing circumstances of the nation, then I must leave the Church; but if you admit that there may have been growth and development, then I contend I am within the Church; and the Chuch decided I was to remain holding this view." Here let it be noted:—(1.) That the Church gave no judgment on the question of the alleged development of the Mosaic legislation; (2.) That a certain development of law has never been denied by any competent theologian, for all have admitted a three-fold development proceeding from the will of God according to the dispensations of grace in the times of the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets; (3.) What is denied is that there was such a development of law as is maintained by the Professor. For this development, in the particular referred to, by inverting the order of history, leaves Israel without a detailed and written marriage law until the return from the captivity, when according to the Professor, the Levitical code was formulated. To impartial criticism it must be evident that what is said in Deuteronomy respecting marriage is a mere supplement or appendix to the marriage law given and recorded in the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus.

The development theory contended for by Professor Smith applies not only to the marriage law, but to the entire history of religion in Israel. It pre-supposes a primitive polytheism, if not also fetichism, out of which, through successive ages, Israel gradually emerged till, in the times of the prophets, the grand conception of the unity and spirituality of God as Jehovah was reached, and became the symbol of Israel's distinctive glory among the nations of the earth. In harmony with this theory, but in direct contradiction to the facts of revelation, are the statements of the Professor regarding the development of law and religious ordinances in Israel.

Much more than was given by the Committee might have been adduced from the article in the *Journal of Philology* in illustration of the nature, character, and consequences of the Professor's theory and method.

THIRD DIVISION.—FOURTH PARTICULAR.

HEBREW HISTORY SINCE DAVID.

What we should have desired to hear more fully from the Professor is not what he thought of the Hebrew literature in the interval between David and the time of Amos and Hosea, but rather what were his views respecting Israel's literature from the time of Moses to the time of David. There is nothing wrong in

saying that in the interval between David and Amos there was a flourishing "historical and legal literature" in Israel. The question is not concerning that matter of fact, but it is, first of all, concerning the authenticity, genuineness, and extent of that literature; and, in the second place, concerning the date, origin, and composition of the same literature. Nothing said by the Professor about the mode in which "writing has always been gone about in the East," and particularly among the Arabians—not even his belief that it was in this way that our present historical books came together—furnishes any help in answering the two questions before us. What he says, however, tends undoubtedly to throw suspicion on the historical truth and reliableness, as well as divine inspiration, of the Pentateuch and other portions of the written word. The fact that we have one continuous history from the beginning of the Bible to the end of the second book of Kings is in keeping with the views of those who affirm that, guided by the Spirit of God, and instructed in the Divine plan, each successive writer took up the pen as it fell from the hand of him who went before him, or that contemporaneous writers acted harmoniously towards the same end. So remarkable is this continuity of Scripture, that the ministry of John the Baptist, in the New Testament, seems to begin, time being ignored, immediately after Malachi has concluded his prophetic labours. This fact, so note-worthy and important, is perverted by Spinoza and all those who have adopted his method to promote the ends of a destructive criticism. For the same ends it would almost seem as if reference had been made to it by Professor Smith.

THIRD DIVISION.—FIFTH PARTICULAR.

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

Here the Professor asks, "Why should I not call Ruth a graceful prose idyll?" and his language indicates his belief that it was not written till the post-exile period. With regard to these two points it need only be remarked:—(1.) That the designation "graceful prose idyll" is fitted to produce the impression that the book is a romance, not a record of historical events, and under that designation this book is spoken of by those critics whose methods, theories, and language have been adopted by Professor Smith; (2.) That, in support of the post-exilian date of the book, he brings forward no argument of any kind, while, at the same time, he would lay the burden of proving the book not to be of that date on those who assign the composition of it to an earlier age.

Here he omits all reference to the post-exile Psalms, although he had said, in the article complained of, that they "occupy a large part of the Psalter." It was due to the Church that he should specify somewhat definitely what he meant by "a large part of the Psalter." This was all the more called for because of the extremely unsatisfactory views which he had previously published respecting many of the Psalms. It is well known that by what the Professor calls "a large part of the Psalter," certain other critics mean almost all those Psalms in which the excellence and perfection of the law (*torah*) are celebrated.

THE MIDRASH.

The remarks made by the Professor on the Midrash in his speech require no comment, provided the record in the book of Chronicles is not confounded with what he calls the sermonizing treatment of Old Testament history. At the same time it should be noted that the Professor's rendering of the word, as it occurs in Scripture, is not accepted by many competent scholars and interpreters.

JONAH.

The Committee, in their report, present the following statement from the article "Hebrew Literature" regarding the book of Jonah. "Along with this came the beginnings of Haggada, the formation of parables and tales attached to historical names, of which the book of Jonah is generally taken as an early example, and which attains much greater dimensions in the apocryphal additions to the Hagiographa."

Here let the Professor's position be clearly defined and understood. (1.) He admits that Jonah was a historical person. (2.) He neither commits himself nor the Church to any theory regarding the book of Jonah. (3.) He states that the book of Jonah is generally taken as an early example of a parable or tale attached to a historical name—"that the theory of Jonah as a parable is a current theory" (*Speech, p. 19.*) (4.) He seems to some extent to favour this theory, of which he gives an elaborate exposition and vindication.

He professes, in his speech, to receive as historical certain parts of the book; while he explains the miracle that befell the prophet on his way to Nineveh, by saying it is nothing more than a parable or a parabolic prophecy. But if this particular miracle be nothing more than an allegory or parable, no matter how ingeniously interpreted, why may not all the miracles of

Holy Scripture be allegories or parables? Nothing but the improbability of the event dictates to the critics the idea of this particular miracle being only a parable. The same improbability dictates to many critics the idea that not even one of the many miracles recorded in the Bible actually took place. By applying this method of interpretation, Woolston, the Deist, maintained that the miracles of Christ were nothing more than prophetical and parabolical narratives or figures of His mysterious and spiritual operations. Is there in all Scripture a miracle better attested than this recorded of the prophet Jonah? The belief of it rests on the truth of the inspired record; but, besides this, it was one of those singled out and sealed by the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, in the face of such testimony, accept part of the book of Jonah as historically true—the journey to Nineveh—and at the same time reject that part of the record in which the miracle is narrated? The only answer given by Professor Smith is that, by most of the critics, the book, "as we have it in its details," is treated as a parable. Regarding it in this light, he has recourse to an ingenious artifice of interpretation, by which, expounding it as a parable, he explains away the miracle. "By taking the book of Jonah as a parable," he says, "we are able to understand what our Lord meant by 'the sign of the prophet Jonah' in a way that the ordinary view does not enable us to do." Of the truth of this statement there can be no question. But, by so interpreting it, we destroy the significancy of the event in relation to the men of Nineveh, and at the same time the direct and designed significancy of the event in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. For wonderful though the miracle was as "a sign to the men of Nineveh," it loses much of its wonderfulness when it is compared with the resurrection of Christ from the dead—that sign to mankind in all ages proclaiming and demonstrating that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of the living God.

THIRD DIVISION.—SIXTH PARTICULAR.

EBER AND THE GENEALOGIES.

The statements made regarding the genealogical tables contained in Gen. x.-xi., destroy the historical relations between Shem, Abraham, and Israel. For not only are names occurring in the tenth chapter represented as "ethnological or geographical abstractions," but personal names given in the eleventh chapter, in the direct historic line between Shem and Abraham, are represented as being nothing more than "ideas personified;"

and so great is the importance attached to this view that the choice is asserted to lie between the acceptance of the Professor's exegesis and the admission of contradictions in the record of Scripture. But surely there is a more excellent way. And it is found by a careful investigation of the tables before us. This investigation is all the more necessary because the whole of the historic and prophetic Scriptures, in their references to the nations outside the commonwealth of Israel, proceed upon the historical reality of the names given in the tenth chapter. And the genealogy of the Lord Jesus, if it is not to be regarded as mythical, necessarily implies that the names in the eleventh chapter were names of real persons, and not of "ideas personified."

The distinction between the genealogical tables in the tenth and those in the eleventh chapter, is obvious on the slightest examination. In order, however, to put this beyond the reach of doubt, let the following considerations be duly weighed:—

(1.) In all Scripture respect is had to a twofold relation of the divine providence towards men; the one depending upon nature, the other upon grace:

(2.) Corresponding with this twofold relation are the divine names Elohim and Jehovah:

(3.) In the fourth chapter of Genesis there is given a genealogical list of the descendants of Cain, illustrative of the natural relationship in which men stand to God—Elohim:

(4.) In the fifth chapter we find a parallel record, in genealogical form, of those successively from Adam to Noah under the covenant of grace, illustrative of the relationship of men to God—Jehovah:

(5.) The intimation of the approaching judgment of the flood, which concerned the whole world, was made by God—Elohim:

(6.) The actual grace vouchsafed to Noah and his family, is represented as proceeding from God—Jehovah:

(7.) The genealogical natural line is continued in the tenth chapter, in which Shem takes rank as the ancestor of many nations, in the same way as Ham and Japheth. The distinguishing feature of this table is that it presents a genealogy of nations rather than of individuals. In other words, the pedigree of nations is traced to the individuals specified as their remote ancestors. Here Shem is said to be the father of all the children of Eber (Gen. x. 21), just as Canaan (Gen. x. 16) is represented as the father of the Amorite, the Girgasite, and the Jebusite. In this table Aram is said to be a son of Shem; but whether a son by immediate descent, or remotely, like the children of Eber, of whom Shem was the father,

cannot be determined conclusively from what is said in the record. The probability is that the Aram here mentioned is the remote descendant of Shem, whose name occurs in the genealogy of the Aramæans given in Gen. xxii. 20-24. In that case, the Professor's argument falls to the ground so far as Aram is concerned, and unless Professor Smith can identify the Huz of Gen. xxii. 21 with the Uz of Genesis x. 23, his demonstration is equally unsatisfactory with regard to Uz. He has failed to show that there is any necessity for the assumption that, unless the records be received as mythical, they must be regarded as mutually contradictory.

The statement in Deut. xxvi. 5, "A Syrian [an Aramæan] ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt," fairly interpreted, involves no question of genealogy; all such questions being otherwise determined. Jacob, who went down to Egypt, might for many reasons be described as an Aramæan. His mother was an Aramæan (Gen. xxii. 20-24), his wives were Aramæans, and he himself had resided in Aramæa for a long period of years. But, irrespective of all this, as Reuss remarks, it seems to be the intention of the writer, in this part of Deuteronomy, to give prominence to the contrast between the wandering and unsettled life of Jacob, and the life of his descendants in the settled possession of a fruitful land.

Thus there is no contradiction either between Genesis and Deuteronomy, or between one part of Genesis and another.

(8.) The genealogical line of grace, given in the fifth chapter, is continued in the eleventh. Here Shem and his descendants in the line of Arphaxad are discriminated from the world at large. The distinguishing feature of this table is that it is a genealogy in which the line of succession, beginning with Adam (chap. v.), extends, through persons whose names are specified, onwards to Abraham (chap. xi.). This is with propriety termed the line of the Messianic genealogy;—a line reaching forward through Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and others, to Jesus, who was the son of David, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam, the son of God. By reducing several of the names in this list to "ethnological abstractions" or "ideas personified," Professor Smith destroys the historic line according to which Jesus can be vindicated to be truly and properly descended from Adam. A genealogy of abstractions, while preserving the unity of Professor Smith's theory, destroys the reality of the patriarchal history. It does more. It destroys the reliableness of the genealogy of the incarnate Son of God as given in the Old Testament and the New.

Besides the way which has been indicated, there is another, in which it can be shown that the genealogical statements in the Pentateuch do not involve the contradictions which Professor Smith thinks can only be avoided by the acceptance of his theory of ethnological and geographical abstractions. He has no right to assume that there was only one person of the name of Aram, any more than that there was only one of the name of Nahor, Gad, or Nathan. According to the view now referred to, Aram, the son of Kemuel, in Gen. xxii. 21, is a different person from Aram, who, in Gen. x. 22, is said to be the son of Shem. Similarly Uz, the son of Aram (Gen. x. 23), is not to be confounded with Huz, the son of Nahor and nephew of Abraham (Gen. xxii. 21); and in Deut. xxvi. 5, where Jacob is referred to as a Syrian or Aramæan, this term does not necessarily signify more than a dweller in the land of Aram, in which Jacob had resided for many years.

Considering what has now been advanced, it is surely bold, and even reckless, in Professor Smith to assert that the statements of Scripture "would not be accurate but self-contradictory if they were not taken in the interpretation which" he has "put on them" (*Speech, p. 21*). This is surely a method of criticism not becoming a devout, modest, or learned theologian. It is a method, however, which, as applied by the Professor, yields "passages which naturally suggest that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences."

THIRD DIVISION—SEVENTH PARTICULAR.

JEREMIAH L.

Here it is stated by the Professor that "an exact parallel to this prophecy, in the sense in which" he speaks "of it, is to be found in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews." He must have strange ideas as to what constitutes an exact parallel, and his logic must be as lawless as his method. For he reasons thus:—The Epistle to the Hebrews is not said in the original text to have been written by Paul, therefore it was not written by the apostle. The prophecy in Jeremiah l., li. is said in the original text to have been written by him; therefore he did not write it. But the matter is too serious to be treated lightly. Let the reader open his Bible in the authorised version. He will there find as the first verse in chapter L. these words:—

"The word that the Lord spake against Babylon, and against the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet."

Let him now turn to the conclusion of this prophetic message as given in chapter li. 59-64, and there, in a variety of forms, and in language the most explicit, he will find it stated that it was written by Jeremiah. Professor Smith nevertheless alleges that it was an anonymous prophecy! He makes this assertion on the ground that, in the Septuagint, the prophecy is not, in the first verse of chapter l., ascribed to Jeremiah. But if not in that place of the Septuagint said to be by Jeremiah, it is, in the concluding verses of chapter li., repeatedly declared to have proceeded from him (see LXX., Jer. li. 59-64). The absence of the words "by Jeremiah the prophet" from the first verse of the fiftieth chapter, is the only argument adduced for ranking this among other prophecies alleged to have been written anonymously. Of these we have already considered Isaiah xiii., xiv. Were these prophecies really anonymous, no argument against the inspiration or authority of Scripture could be founded on the assertion that they were such. But, seeing that in the original and authentic Hebrew text, they are not anonymous, but given in the names of prophets who lived in times well ascertained, the allegations made by Professor Smith are fitted to bring into doubt both the inspiration and the authority of Scripture, by suggesting that it "does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences."

The statement that "everyone now knows that the apostle Paul did not write" the Epistle to the Hebrews, is characteristic of the Professor's dogmatic style, which, like that of many other critics, is strong in the power of unsupported assertions. For there are scholars and theologians not a few who believe and are able to prove that the apostle Paul, and none other than he, was the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and against their weighty arguments, the light, flippant and easy assertions of Professor Smith avail nothing. But whatever may be said on either side regarding a confessedly anonymous document such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the case is widely different when, in direct opposition to the original text, Professor Smith describes as anonymous a prophecy that bears the name of Jeremiah. It is no vindication of this destructive criticism to allege that the titles of certain Psalms are not integral parts of the inspired word. It is with the body of the narrative and not with titles or headings that we have here to do. Moreover, every such question must be determined by its own appropriate evidence, not by general statements. While we are to "prove all things," we are to "hold fast that which is good."

FOURTH DIVISION—PREDICTIVE PROPHECY.

FIRST PARTICULAR. ISAIAH XIII., XIV.

Prophecy, in the full sense of the word, denotes the revelation of the will of God with respect to the past, the present, and the future. The prophet is one who speaks for God, having had made to him the communication of the Divine will. Prophecy may thus assume the form of history in relation to the past; of doctrine or instruction in relation to the present; and of prediction in relation to the future. Yesterday, to-day, and for ever are equally known to God, and in the administration of His kingdom He has, according to His pleasure, revealed His will to His servants, the prophets. Of the prophecies thus divinely given, those of Isaiah occupy a prominent and even commanding place in holy Scripture; and they are quoted and referred to in the New Testament, just as the writings of Moses are referred to, under the name of the writer or prophet. In holy Scripture only one Isaiah is recognized. We cannot, therefore, avoid regarding with suspicion any attempt to reduce the book of Isaiah to fragments. Here the doctrine of rationalistic probability must not be our guide. For the application of that doctrine, commencing with the reduction of books to fragments, leads ultimately to the denial of there being any genuine prophecy in Scripture. Professor Smith, against all evidence, as we have seen, represents certain prophecies as having been given in the form of "anonymous broadsides." This groundless assertion was made by him in order to maintain his theory respecting the dates of such prophecies. And this theory itself springs out of a criticism which proceeds on the improbability of there being in the Bible a single statement that can, with strict propriety, be termed predictive. It is a product of the naturalistic criticism of which the Professor thinks he can avail himself, when at the same time affirming the supernatural origin and divine inspiration of Scripture. Nothing can be more vague, general, or unsatisfactory than the statements made regarding prophecy in the articles "Bible" and "Hebrew Literature." The Professor reiterates assertions respecting inspiration, without giving any definition of that term; and he treats the so-called anonymous prophecies in Isaiah in precisely the same way as they are treated by those critics who deny their truly prophetic character. For the ground on which the rationalistic critics assign Isaiah xiii., xiv. to the Babylonian age is that, with their ideas of predictive prophecy, it was not only improbable but impossible

that they could have been spoken in the time of Isaiah. This may be the Professor's idea of "the best line of defence" against the aggressions of the rationalistic critics; but defence thus conducted by him is surrender. For as well might he deny that the first or any part of Isaiah's book was by him, as deny that he was the writer of the prophecies delivered by him against Babylon. The introductory sentence of the first prophecy is in these words:—"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem;" and the introduction to the prophecy against Babylon is in similar terms:—"The burden of Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." Why accept the one and reject the other? It cannot be on the ground that the first twelve chapters do not reach forward to events far beyond the time of the Babylonian captivity—events, some of which are even yet in the future. On what other ground, then, we may ask is the prophecy against Babylon assigned to the time of the exile? Must a theory of probability be assumed in this case in order to delete from the text the words which give the historical date of the prophecy, and which also vindicate the character of the prophecy as strictly predictive? Why should it seem incredible that, in the visions of God with which Isaiah was favoured, he should behold, passing before his view as in panoramic order, the series of events by which God should avenge his quarrel against Babylon? To represent this as improbable or incredible is not only to "discredit prophecy in its predictive aspect," but it is also to render all prophecy improbable or incredible. Reasoning out the conclusions of Professor Smith, we must assent to the words of Kuenen, when, after having explained away all Scripture prophecy, he says, "Thus the crown which a later generation had placed upon the brows of the Israelitish prophets is in our time removed; but, stripped of that supernatural halo with which they glittered, they reveal all the more clearly their own personal greatness. But we have then no longer, in their prophecies the Word of God Himself, which we, in common with the Christian Church of all ages, thought that we possessed in them. Do not lament that! Each of their words that finds an echo in your heart—and their number is great—is to you a word of God" (Kuenen's "*Prophets and Prophecy in Israel*"). Such is the sad but inevitable result of Professor Smith's method and theory applied to what he calls the anonymous prophecies recorded in the book of Isaiah.

The same reason that leads to the denial of the historical worth of the brief introduction to Isaiah's prophecies against

Babylon has led to the denial, on a far grander scale, of the historical worth of all that certifies that the laws and prophecies contained in Deuteronomy were written by Moses. For while much is made of the alleged opposition between the Deuteronomic laws and those given at Sinai, there can be no question that a powerful reason for endeavouring to show that Deuteronomy was not written till the times of Hezekiah or Josiah, is derived from the fact that several very marked prophetic announcements are made in that book. Hence, in part, at least, the eagerness with which rationalistic critics have contended that Deuteronomy could not have been the work of Moses. Reuss admits that history and law are so interwoven in Scripture, that it is almost impossible to separate them; and this statement holds true respecting the connection between history and prophecy, as well as between history and law. The historical, legal, and prophetical elements are so inwrought into each other in the narrative, and they seem so to grow out of, and so to grow into, each other, that only to the credulity of naturalistic criticism does it appear possible that they should have been artificially patched or compacted together.

What is said respecting those who first published "anonymous broadsides," that this alleged practice indicated a characteristic change from the method of "the former prophets, who wrote only what they had first spoken to the people" is a statement in support of which no proof is offered. And no wonder. For (1.) as we have seen, no such anonymous broadsides are found in Scripture; (2.) no such characteristic change as is alleged is observable; and (3.) there is no indication that the former prophets wrote only what they had first spoken to the people. Others as well as Professor Smith form their opinions by the best light they can get; and, by that light, are constrained to say, in direct contradiction to him, that, in the case of Isa. xiii., xiv., the title of the prophecy in our ordinary text has as much claim to be regarded as "part of the original book and of the word of God," as the prophecy itself or any other portion of the Holy Scripture.

FOURTH DIVISION.—SECOND PARTICULAR.

DANIEL.

Professor Smith's reference to Daniel, in his article, is in the following terms:—

"It is even probable that the Old Testament contains elements as late as the epoch of national revival under the Maccabees (Daniel, certain Psalms)."

There is not a little confusion in the statements made in this part of the article. For, in a sentence preceding the one just quoted, the writer says, that, "at the close of the Old Testament period, the author of Ecclesiastes could speak of the weariness of much study, and the endless sterility of book-making." According to this statement, Ecclesiastes is placed at the end of the Old Testament period. Nevertheless a place still later seems to be assigned to Daniel.

In his speech the Professor attempts to vindicate the opinion expressed in his article. Here, as usual, the rationalistic probability is his guide, for he remarks, "I only say it is probable it was not written before that date." The grounds on which this probability rests are:—(1.) That the book "is written in two languages;" and (2.) That "there are other considerations, pointing to a late date and a peculiar history." These are the only grounds from within the book itself advanced in favour of the position that it must have been written as late as the time of the Maccabees. Let these grounds now be examined. The first, that the book is partly in one language (Hebrew) and partly in another (Aramaic), so far from constituting a probability in favour of its belonging to the Maccabean period, is, when viewed in connection with other characteristics, a very strong argument in favour of its having proceeded from the pen of Daniel. For Daniel was well able to produce such a work as bears his name, having been versed in all the learning of the Hebrews and Chaldeans, as Moses was versed in all the learning of the Egyptians. In this light the book reflects not only the image of his time and circumstances, but the image of the man. This peculiarity, therefore, in the composition of the book is an argument in favour not only of its authenticity but of its genuineness. But to the Professor it seems otherwise.

The "other considerations, pointing to a late date and a peculiar history," are not specified. They no doubt include such as the occurrence in the book of certain words and phrases of foreign origin for the presence of which it is difficult to account according to the doctrine of probability held by the rationalistic critics who ignore everything that is unfavourable to their own foregone conclusion. Among such unspecified considerations, the apocalyptic character of the book, or the so-called fantastic symbolic imagery contained in it, must be taken into account. It has been customary with certain critics to treat this species of prophetical literature in a spirit bordering on contempt. But in this, as in every other case, God, not man, is the competent judge of the form in which His

will should be communicated. Any considerations grounded on the history of the time tend all to the support of the position that the book was, as it bears to be, written by Daniel the prophet. He it was who saw the visions recorded in the book; and of him it is again and again stated that he wrote the vision. The Lord Jesus spoke of him as Daniel the prophet; and even Professor Smith admits part of the book to be prophetical, that part, namely, which treats of Christ and His kingdom, together with the resurrection of the dead. But interpreting certain parts of the book as descriptive of the wars of Antiochus Epiphanes and Ptolemy, Professor Smith regards those parts as history rather than prophecy. In other words, he admits that the prophet Daniel had visions of events that were to occur through the ages onwards till the end of time, while he denies that Daniel foresaw and foretold events which as interpreted by him, were to precede the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. According to this view there must have been two or three Daniels concerned in the production of this book; and the work itself, instead of being authentic and genuine, must be accounted spurious and apocryphal. It is vain after this to speak of certain parts of the text as more valuable than other parts for the Christian Church in the way of edification, unless indeed, with many critics, Professor Smith identifies edification with inspiration. But edification is a precarious index of inspiration. For inspiration is an objective property of the written word of God, whereas edification is a subjective condition of the reader's mind. Unbelief does not take from, nor does faith add to, the inspiration of Scripture. For, as the apostle Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16), and the apostle Peter says that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21); and among these holy men of God, according to the testimony of Ezekiel, confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ, Daniel occupies a place of signal distinction and honour. Nor does it need any prophetic gift to affirm with certainty that the book of Daniel will survive the criticism of Professor Smith. Meanwhile, on the Church in which he holds office there devolves a most weighty and solemn responsibility for the right discharge of its duty to the word and to the name of Christ. The Church must not shut its eyes, and blindly tolerate the criticism that would destroy the prophetic character of the writings of Daniel, Jeremiah, and Moses the man of God. It must use caution, but it must also use courage in vindication of the trust com-

mitted to it, and in the discharge of its duty to the Lord Jesus Christ, if it would receive the commendation and the promise, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10).

FOURTH DIVISION.—THIRD PARTICULAR.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

A graceful exit is to a player what an impressive peroration is to an orator. The conclusion of Professor Smith's speech was neither graceful nor impressive. For, in replying to the statement that in attributing the rise of written prophecy to the eighth century B.C., he appeared to be at variance with the plain teaching of our Lord who says (John v. 46) "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me;" by the exercise of a little verbal dexterity unworthy of the occasion, he avoided the charge grounded on his own words respecting the date of written prophecy in Israel. Attaching one meaning to the phrase "written prophecy" as used by the Committee when he must have known that the phrase was employed by the Committee in a different and more comprehensive sense, he says, "Our Lord always speaks of the Law and the Prophets as two distinct things. I do the same, and, doing so, state the undoubted fact that the earliest of the prophetic books were written in the eighth century." Now on this let it be remarked:—(1.) That it is an interesting specimen of the hair-splitting in which the Professor indulges when put on his defence; (2.) That the statement, like many others made in the defence, is not true—our Lord did not always speak of the Law and the Prophets as two distinct things; and (3.) That when the Lord used the words "Moses wrote of me," His words, according to the concession made by the Professor for the sake of argument, signify that Moses as a prophet wrote concerning Christ. But in that case prophecy began to be written long before the eighth century. It was not, as insinuated by the Professor, either from ignorance or captiousness, any more than from disregard of the fact that the Hebrew Bible is divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, that the Committee stated in their report that the Professor's words appeared "to be at variance with the plain teaching of our Lord."

But it should not be forgotten that the Professor's words, in concluding his speech, proceeded on a concession made merely for the sake of argument. The concession is only

verbal. "Let us accept the whole traditional view," he says, "and say that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch." His speech, beginning with a protest, ends with a quibble. For at the time when he was speaking of Moses as having written the whole Pentateuch, he could not have forgotten that, according to statements made by him on a previous occasion, the name of Moses, as used on many occasions by the Lord, means "no more than" the name of "the old dispensation." "It is in this broad sense," he alleges, "and not with limited reference to any one passage, that, in John v. 46, Moses is said to bear witness to Christ" (*Additional Answer to the Libel, p. 88*). Here let it be noted:—(1.) That, according to the Professor's own showing, the Lord spoke in such comprehensive terms of Moses and the law as to include the prophets, for the old dispensation is surely comprehensive of both law and prophecy; and, (2.) That by this interpretation the name of Moses becomes nothing more than an ethnological or dispensational abstraction. Extremes meet. At variance with the plain teaching of our Lord, the statements of Professor Smith coincide with those of the mystic Swedenborg, who interprets the names of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many others, not as names of persons and prophets, but as names of "dispensations." This is what comes of applying an illegitimate critical method and theory to the written word of God. "But I do much condemn that interpretation of the Scripture," says Lord Bacon, "which is only after the manner as men use to interpret a profane book." This method of interpretation, enunciated by Ernesti before the time of the publication of the Wolfenbüttel fragments (1774-1778), was soon applied in its full rigour by the rationalistic critics of Germany. First, by it the Bible was dismembered or broken into fragments—its unity destroyed; second, the dismembered fragments were alleged to be mutually contradictory—the consentaneousness or self-consistency of Scripture being destroyed; third, the inspiration of the sacred record, incompatible with a writing abounding in self-contradictions, was denied; and fourth, miracle, prophecy, and historical truthfulness, as belonging to the idea of the Bible, were altogether disowned and repudiated. With this lesson before it, let not the Church be deceived. The application of an illegitimate method will yield in Scotland the same sort of fruit that it has produced in other lands. For, by their fruits, methods as well as men are known. "Of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes" (Luke vi. 44).

SUMMARY.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

THE doctrine of the Church concerning the word of God is stated in the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Of that chapter let the following summary suffice :—

Holy Scripture, that is, "the word of God written," is the gracious revelation of the will of God concerning His own glory and man's duty. All this written word is given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. The authority of Scripture is intrinsic—within itself—because it is the word of God. It abundantly proves itself to be the word of God by "the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, with its many other excellencies, and its entire perfection." These arguments demonstrate that holy Scripture is the word of God. But "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts." Scripture is perfect and complete, containing all things necessary to the ends for which it was given. For these ends it is sufficiently intelligible and perspicuous, although in it there are some things hard to be understood. Immediately inspired of God, the original text is genuine and authentical, that is, the text is inspired and pure, therefore of supreme authority in all controversies of religion. It is its own infallible rule of interpretation. It admits of no appeal except to God, the Holy Ghost, speaking in the written word. Thus is the inspired word at once witness, rule, and judge, in all matters pertaining to the glory of God, and the faith, life, and salvation of man.

In all the statements of the Confession it is implied or expressly declared :—

First, That holy Scripture as the word of God, "who is truth itself," is true; that is to say it is true to fact, time, person, place,—historically true ; self-consistent in its testimony, not self-contradictory.

Second, That holy Scripture as the word of God is infallibly true. Originating in the grace of God, it communicates to man the will of God with infallible truth, resting on the veracity of God, its author.

Third, That, historically true and infallibly true, it has been

given by inspiration of God, and is therefore of supreme and exclusive authority as the rule of faith and manners.

The preceding statements contain a condensed summary of the Confessional doctrine of the Church concerning holy Scripture. How then does Professor Smith speak of this first and fundamental article of the Free Church? Referring to the date and character of the book of Ruth, he says, "It is not practical study of Scripture, it is not knowledge of or regard for Scripture that makes men so ready to bring accusations of this sort, but it is a dogmatic prejudice which, if it is ever allowed in this Church to come between us and Scripture—if by it we are to be reduced to the position of nourishing our life from the expressions of the first chapter of the Confession when we ought to be nourishing it from the words of Christ's gospel, and the words of Christ's prophets—then I, for my part, care not how long I remain in the Free Church" (*Speech, p. 19*).

The words of the Professor as thus given are both significant and characteristic.

For (1.) They ascribe to dogmatic prejudice and to ignorance of holy Scripture a view of the book of Ruth, which has been the catholic and historic belief of the Church of God in every age and country, although rejected by Professor Smith and certain modern critics.

(2.) They proceed on the assumption that no one who had prayerfully and laboriously investigated the matter could differ from the Professor's conclusion respecting it;—a conclusion arrived at by the "sweat of his brow" in translating into English the views of continental critics and theologians.

(3.) They assume that those who maintain the comparatively early date, and the strictly historical character of the book of Ruth, are unacquainted with the complicated details of Scripture, and do not nourish their spiritual life from the words of the Lord Jesus and His prophets, but from the expressions of the first chapter of the Confession of Faith—an assumption which, if it means anything, implies that, in that chapter, there is something at variance with the words of the Lord Jesus and His prophets.

(4.) They intimate or imply that those whose views do not coincide with those of the Professor, threw the first chapter of the Confession as a bar in the way of free and searching inquiry into the words and facts of holy Scripture.

(5.) As for the assertion that he, for his part, cared not how long he remained in the Free Church, unless he could enjoy within it all the license which he claimed for himself—

a license to make his views or convictions the measure and standard of doctrinal belief to the Church—all that need be said is that it is in keeping with his whole procedure in this case. For he has hitherto strained every nerve, and has had recourse to every technicality, in order to avoid the probation of a libel three times found relevant against him.

Till the first chapter of the Confession of Faith cease to be the fundamental article of the creed of the Free Church, or till Professor Smith cease to be a minister of that Church, he is bound to the utmost of his power, in his station and office, to assert, maintain, and defend the doctrine therein set forth, and solemnly professed by him when he was ordained to the office of a professor of theology in the Free Church of Scotland. All this will be abundantly evident from the questions answered and the formula subscribed by him when he was admitted to his position as a minister and professor.

QUESTIONS PUT TO MINISTERS AND PROFESSORS.

Every minister or professor, on admission to office in the Free Church, gives affirmative answer to certain questions put to him on the occasion. Among these are the following:—

"I. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?"

The answer to this question covers all that is said in the first chapter of the Confession respecting the historical and infallible truth. self-consistency, divine inspiration, and supreme authority of Holy Scripture; and what we maintain is, that Professor Smith's views, tenets, or opinions respecting the historical, legal, and prophetical elements of Scripture are contrary to and inconsistent with the faith professed in the Church that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God. For

(1.) By reducing the names which occur in the genealogies in the early portions of Scripture to ethnological or geographical abstractions, he destroys the historical foundation of the Bible:

(2.) By his theory respecting the date, character, and mode of composition of the Hebrew literature up to the time of David and before Amos and Hosea, he throws suspicion on the credibility or historic truth and reliableness of that literature—reducing much of it to nothing else than legends, fables, or myths, set skilfully and brilliantly in the forms of patriarchal history:

(3.) By his statements respecting Moses and his writings, he brings into doubt the authenticity and genuineness of those writings, leaving open the whole question concerning the legislation given and the prophecy spoken and written by Moses:

(4.) By his doctrine concerning the Sinaitic and the Deuteronomic law, he sets law against law—the laws given at Horeb against those given on the borders of the Land of Promise:

(5.) By his statements that the words said to have been spoken and written by Moses in Deuteronomy were not spoken or written by him, but by another prophet personating the great law-giver, he not only undermines the grounds of the historic credibility of Deuteronomy, but, in effect, propounds the doctrine that holy men of God, in declaring the divine will, made use, in order to give their words authority, of a literary form, which all reasonable men, notwithstanding what the Professor may allege to the contrary, cannot but deem a literary forgery or a pious fraud. To affirm the divine inspiration of such a composition is to affirm what is unreasonable, incredible, and absurd:

(6.) By representing the Levitical code or law as consisting for the most part, of decisions orally given by the priests, and transmitted onwards, whether in written form or by word of mouth, to the time of the exile, when they were reduced to system, "on lines first drawn by Ezekiel," the Professor inverts the order of history, destroys the idea of law or Torah in Israel, together with the authority of that law, and renders it impossible, with any show of reason, to maintain that such preposterous history, and such a collection of priestly decisions should be regarded as given by inspiration of God:

(7.) By disjoining the historical record from the law recorded in it—a procedure characteristic of the Professor's whole method—he not only invalidates the law, but destroys also the truly prophetic or predictive announcements embedded in the history and the law as given in Holy Scripture. Thus, when Moses is represented as saying, "A prophet shall Jehovah your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me," words which are expressly and repeatedly ascribed to Moses in the New Testament, according to the Professor's view the words are not those of Moses, but of another personating the greatest of Israel's prophets. Like unto that other, therefore, not like unto Moses, must be the prophet whose advent is foretold in this part of Deuteronomy, unless indeed, Moses is here, as elsewhere he is alleged to be by the Professor, a synonym for the old dispensation. In that case, the words might be thus

rendered, "A prophet shall Jehovah your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto the old dispensation:"

(8.) By his statements respecting law and history, he introduces contradiction between the facts in Israel's history, and the worship of Jehovah in Israel. For undoubtedly the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple pre-supposed the facts, laws, and records of the Pentateuch, as certainly as all these were implied in the reformation effected in the times of Josiah, and in the setting up anew, after the primitive model, of the ordinances of divine worship in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. More particularly in this respect are the Psalms rendered meaningless or incredible. For certain Psalms that cannot be proved not to have belonged to the time of David and Solomon, necessarily imply that before they were composed and sung, Israel was in possession of the Pentateuchal history and law:

(9.) The date assigned to the Pentateuch by the Professor's theory renders unintelligible and incredible the charges given by Moses to Joshua his successor, and those afterwards given to him by Jehovah Himself:

(10.) By what the Professor says respecting the Song of Songs, the book of Jonah, and certain portions of the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the historical and infallible truth, and the divine inspiration and authority of those writings are impugned, and the grounds on which these can be vindicated are undermined:

(11.) The right to a place in the canon of such books as Esther, Ruth, the Song of Songs, Jonah, and Daniel, can never be maintained and vindicated; that is, their inspiration cannot be affirmed if they were composed in the way described by the Professor, and if they are, in their contents and character, what he pronounces them to be:

(12.) The theory of personation which pervades the criticism of the Professor is altogether subversive of the fact of inspiration, and of the doctrine maintained by the Church of God concerning holy Scripture. The idea, itself derived from the rationalistic schools, may be compatible with the method of those schools, and with theories that represent the Bible from beginning to end as nothing more than a collection of parables or allegories; but it is contrary to and inconsistent with the solemn declaration made by the Professor when he was ordained, that he believed the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners. Who will believe this, if informed that Leviticus, from beginning to end, and the book of Deuteronomy

were composed according to a theory of personation—that the words said in the former book to be spoken to Moses, and in the latter book by Moses, were spoken only to and by one who personated Moses? By this theory these books are really reduced to the level of apocryphal literature, that is of books given to the world under false names, in order to add to their otherwise defective authority. To the same level (and for substantially the same reasons) must the books of Ecclesiastes, Jonah, and Daniel be reduced. So subtle, so flexible, and so capable of universal application is this idea that there is no reason why, in carrying out the Professor's theory, the whole Bible should not be represented as unhistorical, parabolical, and incredible, consisting of a congeries of "cunningly devised fables." To allege of such a collection, or of books, or portions of books composed according to the theory of personation, that they are to be received as given by inspiration of God, is to state what is alike inconsistent with the laws of reason and the facts and findings of historical criticism. Besides this, contrary to all that is revealed in holy Scripture regarding the character and ways of God, it represents Him not only as accessory to, but as virtually the author of, a series of pious frauds, designed to form part of a book given to be the only rule of faith and life to mankind.

It should not be forgotten that the theory of inspired personation, as held by the Professor, is by him not restricted to Deuteronomy, but, as we have seen, is applied to the Levitical portions of the Pentateuch, as also to Ecclesiastes, to the prophet Jonah, and to the prophet Daniel. The Levitical legislation is ascribed to a personator of Moses who lived after Ezekiel, while Ecclesiastes is ascribed to a personator of Solomon, writing after the return from the exile. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile these opinions with the honesty of the writers; yet, according to Professor Smith, the personators were inspired, and consequently inspired to personate. While holding this view, he refuses to associate the idea of fraud with the composition of these books. But in this he stands alone among the critics who agree with him in holding the theory of personation. Nor is this to be wondered at, for the rationalistic critics are too shrewd to believe in personation without an adequate motive—the motive, namely, of procuring for a book an authority and acceptance greater than its author's own name could obtain for it. It is to be hoped that the day is far distant when the Free Church will sanction the teaching in her halls of any such theory of inspired personation.

(13.) Once more. The theory according to which law and religious ordinances underwent progressive development in Israel, as affirmed by the Professor, is not only irreconcilable with all that is stated concerning this matter in the Old Testament and in the New, but it overturns the foundations of law and prophecy in Israel. This theory, however, is a mere twig or branch, from the stem of the rationalistic criticism. It proceeds on the idea developed in the article on "Animal Worship," in the *Journal of Philology*, that the ancestors of the Hebrews, in common with the progenitors of the other families of mankind, were originally and for many ages worshippers of "creeping things, birds, and four-footed beasts." According to this theory, the continuity of the promise and of the worship of God in the line of Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, and Abraham, is historically incredible. This view may coincide with the Professor's statements respecting the "ethnological abstractions" in Genesis; but it contradicts the Scriptures, and, instead of the word of God, leaves to us false history, false law, false prophecy, and a false gospel; all of which, nevertheless, we are expected to believe has been given by inspiration of God.

The second question put to ministers or professors at their admission to office is in these terms:—

"II. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith approven by former General Assemblies of this Church to be founded upon the word of God; and do you acknowledge the same to be the confession of your faith; and will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain, and defend the same, and the purity of worship as presently practised in this Church?"

The third question is:—

"III. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to and inconsistent with the aforesaid Confession of Faith?"

The affirmative answer to the two preceding questions is the ground on which constitutional action can be originated and prosecuted against any minister or professor chargeable with holding, teaching, or promulgating opinions contrary to, or inconsistent with, the Confession of Faith. Such opinions may or may not, in so many direct terms, oppose or contradict the statements of the Confession. It is enough to warrant procedure that the opinions, doctrines, or tenets, in any given case, be contrary to, or inconsistent with, the Confession.

Such opinions may be far more destructive than others that directly contradict Confessional declarations or statements of doctrine.

Omitting other questions which have no direct bearing on our subject, the sixth question may here be given:—

"VI. Do you promise to submit yourself willingly and humbly in the spirit of meekness unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery, and to be subject to them, and all other Presbyteries and superior judicatories of this Church where God in His providence shall cast your lot; and that, according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this Church, notwithstanding of whatsoever trouble or persecution may arise; and that you shall follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church?"

The affirmative answer to this question binds him who gives it not only to submit to the admonitions of his brethren, and to be subject to the judicatories of the Church, but also to maintain unity and peace against error and schism, and to maintain the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church as against the following of divisive courses.

THE FREE CHURCH FORMULA.

After having answered the foregoing and other questions, every minister or professor, at the time of his admission to office, subscribes what is called the Formula, that is the engagement by which he is formally bound to live, teach, and act, according to the answers given to the questions put to him. The parts of this engagement directly and immediately bearing on the case under consideration are the following:—

"I do hereby declare that I do sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approven by former General Assemblies of this Church, to be the truths of God; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith . . . . I promise that, through the grace of God, I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and, to the utmost of my power, shall, in my station, assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine . . . . and I promise that I shall follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline, government, and exclusive jurisdiction of this Church, renouncing all doctrines, tenets, or opinions whatsoever contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said doctrine, worship, discipline, government, or jurisdiction."

CONCLUSION.

It is for the Church to determine whether the opinions, tenets, or theories of Professor Smith are or are not in accordance with the declaration solemnly made by him at the time when he was admitted to office. It is also for the Church to determine and conclude whether, holding the opinions reported on by the Committee, and other similar opinions, he can be permitted to retain the office of a public teacher within the communion of the Free Protesting Church of Scotland. With a view to the determination of this grave question, it is the duty of every Christian man to pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto the ministers and elders of the Church, with whom the decision of this question rests, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the truth, so that the judgment given shall be such as shall tend to promote the prosperity of the Church, and the glory of God.

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